



Operational Report

2024

PRESIDENTS REPORT

This year we saw our events grow in attendance, and our social media and digital channel reach expand, reflecting a strong and engaged community. The consistency in our event scheduling also made it easier for members and newcomers alike to plan ahead and stay connected. Most notably, our membership growth exceeded expectations, a clear sign that people are connecting with the purpose and vision of Sydney Leather Men Inc. Thank you to everyone who's helped shape and support this momentum.

Michael Watson & Phil Reilly
Presidents in 2024
Sydney Leather Men Inc.

Presented 3rd May 2025

www.sydneyleathermen.com

INTRODUCTION

- The past year has been one of growth, evolution, and success for our association. As we reflect on the milestones and challenges of the year, it's clear that our continued commitment to fostering a strong leather and fetish community has guided everything we do. From expanding our events calendar to deepening our community engagement, this has been a year of meaningful connection and impact.
- We extend our heartfelt thanks to our new members, event supporters, our generous sponsors, and community stakeholders who have worked alongside us, your enthusiasm, commitment, and belief in what we do have been instrumental in shaping our journey. Each contribution, whether through participation, partnership, or support, has helped bring our vision to life.
- We offer gratitude to the dedicated committee members—both past and present, whose leadership and hard work have steered us through the year, And to the broader community, thank you for showing up, embracing our spaces, and helping us build something special.

OVERVIEW

- Sydney Leather Men was born out of a desire to put Sydney back on the leather map. After a period of decline, we set out with clear intent, to create safe, affirming spaces for individuals who identify as male or masculine and are attracted to those who identify similarly, and where a new generation could discover and embrace leather culture on their own terms and thrive. In 2024 we celebrated our 2nd anniversary in this iteration of SLM.
- We hold fast to the belief that all members and attendees deserve a safe and respectful environment. We lead—with purpose, with pride, and always, with community at heart.
- We strongly believe that 2024 marked a significant step in putting Sydney back on the leather map. Sydney Leather Men has earned widespread respect and admiration, with our approach even being referenced by other groups both domestically and internationally as a respected model. That said, we haven't been immune to criticism or negativity, something that naturally comes with increased visibility and substantial growth. However, we remain focused on doing what works and what the community continues to show they value. As leaders within the leather and fetish landscape, we also recognise that there are gaps in the scene. While some of these sit outside our direct vision, we're committed to stepping up where we can, helping to shape, support spaces that excite, uplift, and inspire.
- Our first membership year wrapped on December 31st. We commenced with a modest membership target, but thanks to your overwhelming support, we more than doubled our goal, ending with an incredible 117 financial members! This success reaffirms the communities belief in what SLM Inc. stands for.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- We exceeded our membership goal for 2024, we set a modest target of 50 and ended the year with 117.
- We negotiated a new venue arrangement with The Oxford using our success in 2024 as the basis for the arrangement that will see us go from strength to strength in 2025.
- 2024 marked a remarkable year for our titleholders. Sydney Mr Leather 2023 Coach Jura, achieved global recognition by placing 4th at International Mr Leather (IML), continuing the hard work of those before him in elevating Sydney's visibility in the international leather community. Timo - Sydney Mr Leather 2024, began his own journey after winning the title in July 2024 and continues with strength and vision, and inspires our community.
- This year, SLM Inc contributed approx. \$3,400 in support of travel commitments for local titleholders and support for organisations like Qtopia Sydney and TWENTY10, We are committed to further supporting important community initiatives in 2025.
- SLM events appeared several times in QNEWS social pages, with our images that immortalise our events shared in both online and print versions. Thanks to Darkroom Daddy Photography for photographing our events.
- SLM were invited to represent the fetish community with the opening of Qtopia Sydney Toilet Block exhibition. It was an honour to represent the fetish and kink community.
- We welcomed International Mr Leather Marcus Barella to our events during Mardi Gras 2024. SMrl23 Igor was involved in discussions with Marcus to bring him down under. It was an honour to have him join our events and get to witness our community, something he spoke fondly of in future interactions.

MEMBERSHIP & COMMUNITY

- Our monthly newsletter while comprehensive in length, is an important part of communicating with our members, especially those who do not use social media. We remain committed to ensuring we have communication channels that do not rely solely on Social media.
- Our website has continued to evolve into a central hub for information, photos, updates, and our merchandise shop, helping us reach members and supporters both locally and globally.
- We saw 117 member sign ups in 2024 with the bulk (94) of those in January upon launch of the membership program followed by February and July being the biggest months.
- SLM uses a membership system called 'Paid Memberships Pro' which is an add on to our wordpress driven website and requires an annual fee that is quite reasonable. While we looked at more expensive options at this stage of our development it was decided that this system was fit for current purpose and membership levels, although we have since learnt some limitations on renewal and we are aware the system wont do prorated membership based on when a person joins. There is an appetite when income from membership increases to looking at better membership program options.
- Our end of year survey showed a 9.5/10 satisfaction with the experience of being part of SLM and generally the comments were positive and encouraging in nature.

EVENTS

- In 2024, SLM hosted 25 events, most of which were FREE, with only a handful requiring pre-orders or modest door charges. Attendance ranged from high 30s at the lowest to 120 at the peak, with an average of 60-70 people at our monthly socials. These gatherings strengthened our community and we estimate they injected over \$20,000+ into our local hospitality and partner venues.
- This year, we gave away approx. \$4,000 in sponsored prizes from raffles and almost \$700 in free drinks to members! A huge thank you to our sponsors who made these benefits possible
- We invited Australian Leather Man Shane Stevens to bring his titleholder forum to sydney in February 2024 as a way to help encourage our community into considering running for titles.
- UNITY in February 2024 during Mardi Gras sold out, becoming our first ticketed event, also the one of the first events where we had over 100 people.
- Inquisition returned in 2024 and Haus of Savvy invited SLM to be an affiliate organisation of the event. We volunteered several members to assist with crowd control and coat check and in return these individuals received free entry.
- SLM President Mick Watson was invited to judge the Brisbane Leather titles in September 2024 and represented SLM alongside several of our community who made the trip north.

EVENTS

- Sydney Leather Week was held in July 2024, and in August had evolved in Sydney Leather Festival. SLM had provided some infrastructure and initial support and with Sydney Leather Women forming and using 'SLW' organisers decided to give it its own identity and rename from Week to Festival and stand on its own.
- Our President and SMrL23 visited Taiwan and specifically Taipei for the pride festival to represent our community alongside International Puppy Jaxx. This was an opportunity to create connections with the Asian community, primarily as Taipei Pride is seen as a central meeting place for the Asian leather community. For transparency they made this trip at their own expense and SMrL23 was a VIP in the parade entry.
- We started Leather & Laces, an event that's all about showcasing and supporting the art and community of bootblacks. This in turn saw our committee take a considered approach to how we can best support and include bootblacks in 2025 at our events.
- Upon hearing that Fetish Australia were not taking part in Mardi Gras 2025 we raised the idea that a float be created for Mardi Gras included SLM, SLW and SLQ. The approach to SLW & SLQ was initially rejected by SLW and SLQ, after some discussion and reconsidering they joined on and the float along with it being kindly supported and mentored by Studio Kink.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The financial health of the organisation remains strong, with positive membership growth in the 2024 year. We encountered isolated cost challenges and lower than expected merchandise income along with an approved Mardi Gras grant that did not eventuate by our choice, however our financial health remains favourable making a profit of \$2027 and we are confident of a positive outlook.

We could'nt have achieved the 2024 financial outcome without some dedicated and supportive sponsors.

- Sax Fetish
- Naughty Boy Australia
- Haus of Savvy & The Naked Barber
- Studio Kink Sydney
- Trash Daddy
- Brute Club & Rogue Party
- Arrows Club Rydalemere
- Punkuture
- DR13:18 Leather
- Adult Stuff Warehouse
- Eagle Bar Sydney
- Fetish Daddy
- Burdekin Hotel
- Kinsela's Hotel

For a detailed view see the financial report.

MERCHANDISE

- Merchandise, we introduced the first limited edition t-shirts with designs by Jaime Aguilar. SLM purchased these designs from Jaime to support him as a local artist.
- We had bought woven patches of the SLM Logo, however these were sold at a loss as they the price point was higher than what people wanted to pay, we have since discontinued having patches in our merchandise range.
- SLM Invested in Pins that were magnetic with a view it wouldnt then hurt peoples leather like pins, however it became evident that magnetic pins were not strong enough on the thickness of leather and decision was made to move to pins with clasps.
- SLM took part in the market stalls as part of the leather titles competition night to help promote SLM and sell merchandise. This stall was successful in selling off patches, pins and some shirts and even generated a few member sign ups.

COMMITTEE & GOVERNANCE

- 2024 saw changes in committee roles throughout the year, with new members stepping in and others stepping down.
 - Specifically Raymond Van Der Zalm (Rayboi), Stephen Green and Ian Wall who were involved in the early stages of the evolution of SLM and whose efforts and guidance are forever appreciated.
 - These resignations resulted in Peter Rayner assuming treasurer position and Igor Rudar assuming the role of Secretary.
 - In 2024 we welcomed new members onto the committee in Shane Imbert, Phil Reilly, Jon Nguyen, Jaime Aguilar and Tony Pike.
- During the SLW24 program two 2 of our committee were asked to be Judges for the Sydney Leather Titles Competition. The outgoing SMr123 Igor 'Coach' and Raymond 'Rayboi'.
- In February 2024 we introduced an Inclusion Policy that was developed with the support of Zac Cannell and Morgan Rogers who are Australian Leather Titleholders and leaders in the trans and gender expression space.
- Throughout 2024 our committee members met with representatives of the current and previous HCB committee to form relationships with key personnel, we also engaged known experts to help develop greater perspectives on our committee and its roles in the to ensure we were set up in a way that was suitable for success.

CHALLENGES & LOOKING AHEAD

- Like all community organisations, we have faced challenges, from managing changing venue arrangements to navigating broader social conversations affecting our community, These are ongoing discussions that we approach with care, consultation, and an unwavering commitment to building a safer environment for all.
- We saw challenges from Facebook several times removing images and content or giving us warnings, Yet none of this content should have been flagged. This resulted in an increased focus on our website being the single source of truth and information.
- During SLW24 there were comments made on social media about the gender expression of a competitor in the Sydney Mr Leather competition, these comments were condemned by SLM publicly and our executive dealt with these comments promptly and checked in on the wellbeing of the competitor.
- While we typically prefer to focus on the positive and forward momentum, it's important to acknowledge a challenge that persisted throughout 2024. Despite several genuine and respectful attempts to support other groups and events, these efforts were not embraced. SLM Inc. remains committed to working constructively and collaboratively with the organisers of events like The Hide amongst others in ways that benefit the wider leather and fetish community. We respect, recognise and encourage the value and importance of other community groups and events in the local landscape.

CHALLENGES

- We continued to struggle to find willing volunteers throughout 2024 for events and this is likely to remain an ongoing challenge as most community organisations have also stated this is something they also face.

PRESIDENTS COMMENT & LOOKING AHEAD

SLM Inc has made a robust start to 2025 & we continue to strengthen our offering to our financial members & supporters. Our committee is focusing on executing our strategy, delivering for our members, and driving the results we need to achieve our goals. Our mission is to create affinity spaces for gay male and male identifying leather men.

Our move to the Oxford Hotel, a new home that is supporting our growth and we continue to build a great working relationship. This working relationship is reaping benefits in regards to our ability to achieve our goals, like increasing our event footprint by almost double in 2025 by introducing UNITY an inclusive, all fetish, all welcome social on a Saturday night to provide a different day from usual events and we plan to work with other stakeholders on reintroducing specialist fetish events like a cigar focused event.

With these and other goals coming to fruition, we're proving our resilience and that we are positioned for continued growth and success.

PRESIDENTS COMMENT & LOOKING AHEAD

We are seeking new opportunities to strengthen our portfolio to deliver for our members. Includes:

- New Membership Benefit Partners
- New & expanded events
- AGM, new constitution & committee election In addition to our strong performance, we are focused on cost management and increasing revenue from additional membership numbers. Also making the work of our committee transparent to our members.
- We hope to increase our membership in 2025 by 30% and reach 155 financial members. Membership remains our biggest opportunity and need for the sustainability of SLM long term.

These efforts aren't just "nice to do" - they're important to ensure we move forward together and focused on highest-value work to further strengthen SLM Inc.

Looking out for one another - as a community organisation it is important we do what we can to help one another. Thank you for your attention to supporting fellow members.

One challenge we need to address is the need for members to want to get involved and volunteer to help out, not only on the committee but in the operations of our events.

PRESIDENTS COMMENT & LOOKING AHEAD

SLM Inc in 2050 – In 25 years many of us will still be around. The decisions we make in 2025 - how we invest our time, how we lead, will define our presence in future years. Our committee is ready to navigate any changes we are faced with, both externally & internally. We will continue to invest energy listening to ideas from our members and partners, and understanding how we can continue to thrive in the future. SLM Inc is a young organisation and we are just getting started.

To every volunteer, member, sponsor, and supporter, thank you. Your attendance and energy fuels this community, and we are grateful for the trust you have placed in this organisation.

We are deeply grateful for the support. Looking ahead, The hard work we have done over the past several years is delivering wonderful results for Sydney's leather community. We will build on our momentum and make 2025 truly matter, for our members, and SLM Inc's future.

Thank you for caring for each other. Let's keep growing, together.
Lead With Love!

Keep up the great work Sydney Leather Men!

Phil Reilly